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SNIE 13-4-63
31 JULY 1963

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SPECIAL
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 13-4-63

Possibilities of Greater Militancy by the Chinese Communists

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf
31 JULY 1963

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

19 AUG 1996

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The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and NSA.

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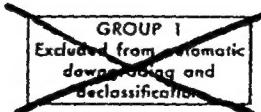
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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

31 July 1963

SUBJECT: SNIE 13-4-63: POSSIBILITIES OF GREATER MILITANCY BY THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS

THE PROBLEM

To consider the possibility of more assertive Chinese Communist actions in the near future, arising from the coincidence of deepening Sino-Soviet dispute and recent Soviet negotiations with the West.

THE ESTIMATE

1. It is clear that the leadership of Communist China resents the turn of events which has seen the USSR move toward detente with the West at the very moment when the Sino-Soviet quarrel has reached a new peak of vindictiveness. This raises the question whether the Chinese might conclude that their interests would be served by more assertive actions. We have some indicators of possible new Chinese actions, but these remain slight as yet.

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2. Even though the Chinese are especially perturbed at the present moment, we do not believe that they will act recklessly or run very great risks, such as a renewal of the Korean War or even a major invasion deep into India. Over the past few years, in spite of their warlike oratory, they have followed a generally cautious policy. Moreover, China's leaders probably now consider that the deepening Sino-Soviet dispute has decreased the chances of Soviet support for any Chinese adventurism, and that this in turn raises the chances that the US would react vigorously to any extreme Chinese initiatives. The Chinese have thus far shown marked respect for US power, and we do not expect them to change this basic attitude.

3. However, this does not mean Chinese inaction. We believe that the Chinese may become more disagreeable, and there is a possibility that they will undertake somewhat more assertive initiatives, in the hope of attaining limited but visible gains at minimum risk. In so acting, the Chinese would seek to disrupt future negotiations between the Soviets and the West, and to demonstrate that the courses they advocate are more likely to bring advantages to the Communist cause. The most likely such Chinese initiatives would be new pressures or incursions on the Indian border and in Laos.

A. The Indian Borders

4. Peiping has made no secret of the fact that Soviet military and economic assistance to India has been especially galling, as was Moscow's stand during Chinese-Indian hostilities last fall. In addition to furthering their basic objectives, the Chinese might hope that by increasing military pressure along the Indian frontiers or occupying part of the NEFA they could further embarrass Moscow by underlining the fact that it is supporting an India associated with the West rather than Communist China.*

5. Chinese Communist forces presently in the Sino-Indian border area have probably remained essentially unchanged since the fighting in the fall of 1962, though road improvement and stockpiling have probably improved their offensive capabilities. The Chinese

* "The Acting Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, does not believe that Peiping will step up its military pressure along the Indian frontier or attempt to reoccupy NEFA for the reasons given in this paragraph. Even if the Chinese Communists believe they can annoy and embarrass the Soviets by such action, they have no reason to believe the Soviets would alter their policies toward India as a result. Moreover, a Peiping attack coupled with Chinese intransigence on the test-ban treaty would probably antagonize many countries which last fall were willing to remain at least neutral on the Sino-Indian border conflict."

would be able to launch strong attacks anywhere along the frontier with little or no warning. The Indians have improved their defenses in the Ladakh area. They have also shifted their troops so that they are in a better tactical position to defend Assam, but for political and military reasons they have left much of the NEFA completely undefended. The Chinese would react vigorously to Indian movement of troops into disputed border areas or air maneuvers there, and are capable of reoccupying vacated positions with little warning or difficulty.

6. Either independently or in conjunction with increased military pressures on India, the Chinese will almost certainly attempt to continue to exploit Pakistani concern over Western military aid to India by seeking closer diplomatic, economic, or even military ties with Pakistan. They might also encourage a more aggressive Pakistani posture in Kashmir. By these actions the Chinese would hope to exacerbate further Pakistani-US and Pakistani-Indian relations. They will also continue to woo Nepal in the hope of completing the isolation of India in the subcontinent. Less likely is an incursion into Nepal to suppress Tibetan resistance groups which have taken refuge there.

7. The Chinese might also take indirect action against border areas, including clandestine support for dissident

tribal hill peoples. Indian military operations against such dissidence would be politically embarrassing to India and could even, at a future time, provide the Chinese with adequate pretexts for direct military support of the hill tribes by moving their own forces back into NEFA.

B. Laos

8. China's leaders may believe that the neutralist-rightist position in Laos is so shaky and the policy of the US so lacking in firmness that considerable gains could be made there quickly and without great risk. If so, they could encourage the DRV/PL to raise the level of military action.* In addition, these tactics would place the USSR in a difficult position: Soviet reluctance to push the "national liberation struggle" would damage Moscow within the world Communist movement; on the other hand, Soviet support of the Chinese would impede present Soviet effort toward a detente with the US.

* "The Acting Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that the first sentence of this paragraph conflicts with the assessment in paragraph 2 that the Chinese Communists "will continue to show marked respect for US power." He would also prefer that the second sentence of this paragraph read: "If so, they could encourage the DRV/PL to take additional and limited military action."

9. We believe that the DRV/PL would probably be amenable to quickening the tempo of Communist insurrection in Laos, provided there seemed no imminent danger of extreme US action against North Vietnam itself. Should there be evidence of such danger, however, we doubt that Peiping's influence or leverage over Hanoi would be sufficient to induce the DRV markedly to raise the Communist ante in Laos.*

C. Other Possibilities

10. We believe it highly unlikely that the Chinese Communists would incur the extreme risks involved in encouraging or supporting an overt attack on South Korea. We have no significant indicators that they think of doing so. This is the one area of confrontation, however, where Soviet security interests are directly involved. It is conceivable, therefore, that the Chinese might estimate that Moscow would have to enter the fight on the Chinese side if the US,

* "The Acting Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that this paragraph ignores the similarity of interests of Peiping and Hanoi, and exaggerates their willingness to quicken the tempo. Both apparently wish to keep their actions in Laos within the present framework of erosive political-military tactics. Most importantly, they do not appear willing to risk significant escalation with the possibility of US counteraction. Furthermore, as long as they continue to accept the Geneva Agreements, Hanoi in particular, but also Peiping, have an interest in avoiding a public split with the Soviet Union over Laos and the consequent danger that the USSR, as co-chairman, will join with the West in measures to condemn and even contain the insurgent advance."

coming to the defense of the ROK, again approached the Soviet and the Chinese boundaries. In any case, the Chinese will probably encourage the North Koreans to maintain a high level of tension along the DMZ. ~~The Chinese~~ will possibly increase military assistance to North Korea.

11. Peiping might try to persuade Hanoi to change the nature of the war in South Vietnam by introducing more open DRV military support into the struggle. Peiping might also attempt to assume a more prominent role than it has yet demonstrated in the support of Communist insurgency in South Vietnam. To this end, it might markedly increase Chinese logistic support to the DRV. The latter two courses seem more likely to us than the first.

12. The Chinese Communists can resume their harassment of Quemoy and Matsu at will. It is possible, but unlikely, that they will attempt to seize one or more of the offshore islands.

13. The Chinese might increase pressure on Hong Kong and Macau, although they continue to be of considerable advantage to Peiping in their present status. Moreover, a decision to involve the UK and Portugal would involve Chinese policy considerations other than those discussed in this estimate.

* "The Acting Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that the estimate in this paragraph should be limited to those of the first and last sentences."

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14. A crisis of a different character could develop should border clashes occur between the USSR and Communist China. They have occurred in the past and, in the light of present Sino-Soviet relations, could take place on an even larger scale in the future. If such clashes became serious, they would tend to reduce the likelihood of Chinese Communist moves against its other borders.

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